

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A method for providing a piece of content to a subscriber terminal from a content server, wherein the provision of the content from the content server to the subscriber terminal is controlled by a proxy, and said control of the content provision comprises the following steps:

- receiving, from the subscriber terminal, in the proxy a content request for providing the content,
- determining, by the proxy, whether or not the content is chargeable content, wherein the determining step includes accessing a database that includes information that is indicative of which content is chargeable and which content is free to end users connected to a network,
- determining by means of the proxy a billing address for the chargeable content,
- providing the content corresponding to the content request under the control of the proxy from the content server to the subscriber terminal, and
- generating billing information related to the chargeable content, wherein generating billing information includes accessing a subscriber terminal profile, and wherein the subscriber terminal profile includes a prepaid amount provided by an end user of the subscriber terminal.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the subscriber terminal is located in an access network in which the subscriber terminal is addressed by an access network subscriber identity, and the content server is located in a service network in which it is addressed by an IP address, and wherein the determination of the billing address comprises the following steps:

- allocating an IP address to the subscriber identity in the access network or at its edge,
- receiving in the proxy the IP address allocated to the subscriber identity,
- determining in the proxy on the basis of the received IP address the subscriber identity of the subscriber terminal and using it to determine the billing address.

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the determination of the subscriber identity on the basis of the received IP address comprises an inquiry to a database in the proxy.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the determination of the subscriber identity on the basis of the received IP address comprises an inquiry to the access network.

5. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said billing information related to the content is sent to the access network to be combined with billing information of the access network.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the subscriber identity of the subscriber terminal is hidden from the content server.

7. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the generation of the billing information related to the content comprises the step of maintaining billing criteria in a database functionally connected to the proxy.

8. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the billing criteria comprise the payer of the content.

9. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein if a content provider pays for the content, the content provider pays for telecommunications costs between the subscriber terminal and the proxy, in which case the use of the content is completely free of charge to the subscriber.

10. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the billing criteria comprise information on whether the subscriber in question has already been billed for the same content, in which case the following uses of the same content will be billed according to a lower tariff or not at all.

11. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the billing criteria comprise information on whether the content in question belongs to a group of content segments with a special price.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein determining the billing address comprises:

allocating an IP address to the subscriber terminal in an access network;  
receiving, in the proxy, the IP address allocated to the subscriber terminal; and  
determining, in the proxy, a subscriber identity based on the IP address and correlating it to the billing address.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the billing information is generated based on billing criteria that includes whether or not the subscriber terminal has previously been billed for the same content.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the billing information is generated based on billing criteria that includes whether or not the content is part of a group of content segments that are offered at a special price.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein if the content is part of a group of content segments, then the subscriber terminal is entitled to use a portion of the group at a lower price or for free.

17. (Previously Presented) The method Claim 1, further comprising:  
performing, by the proxy, one or more currency conversions in cases where currencies used in an access network, to which the subscriber terminal is part of, and a service network, which can couple the proxy and the content server, are different.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
performing, by the proxy, one or more protocol conversions in cases where protocols used in an access network, to which the subscriber terminal is part of, and a service network, which can couple the proxy and the content server, are different.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein generating billing information further includes billing the subscriber terminal for content delivered by the content server to the subscriber terminal.
20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proxy is configured to identify one or more pieces of content that are included in an agreement between an operator of the content server and an operator of the proxy.
21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proxy does not forward the content request to the content server until the proxy identifies whether or not selected content is included in an agreement between an operator of the content server and an operator of the proxy.
22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proxy directly forwards the content request to the content server after the proxy identifies that selected content is not included in an agreement between an operator of the content server and an operator of the proxy.
23. (Canceled)
24. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the subscriber terminal profile includes a maximum amount for unbilled content that is reflected by an agreement between an end user of the subscriber terminal and an operator of the content server or an operator of the proxy.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proxy does not fulfill the content request if the maximum amount for unbilled content has been reached.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the content is not billed at one time because it corresponds to streaming content.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a price for the content is determined based on a time at which the content is requested.

29. (Previously Presented) A proxy system for providing content service, the apparatus comprising:

a router component in communication with a subscriber terminal through an access network, the router component operable to receive a request for content service from the subscriber terminal and to determine if the content service is chargeable, the content being provided by a content server;

a web switch component operable to receive the request from the router component and to deliver the content service to the subscriber terminal if the content service is chargeable; and

a processor component comprising control logic operable to determine a billing address for the subscriber terminal based on a subscriber identity that uniquely identifies the subscriber terminal to the access network, to monitor the delivery of the content service to the subscriber terminal, and to generate billing information based on the delivery of the content service.

30. (Previously Presented) The proxy system of Claim 29, wherein the processor component further comprises control logic operable to transmit the billing information to a billing system associated with the access network.

31. (Previously Presented) The proxy system of Claim 30, wherein the processor component determines the billing address by matching the subscriber identity to a network address received from the subscriber terminal.